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A SKETCH OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

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RELIGION was not scientifically studied until the nineteenth century. The Greek fathers of the Christian church did, indeed, recognize ethnic inspiration; but the later Roman fathers disparaged the whole life of heathendom, and mediæval thought was based upon an isolation of sacred from secular, including, of course, science. The Renaissance restored classic culture to esteem; and the discovery of the globe, with its varied peoples and cultures, and of the starry heavens, further extended man's vision. Disputes between Protestants and Catholics pre-occupied thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and abstract rationalism—Dupuis and Hume—hindered progress in historical research in the eighteenth century.

In 1823 Fr. Creuzer was the first to compare Greek myths with Oriental ones. Meanwhile, Vico and Herder had founded the philosophy of history, and thereby prepared the way for Hegel (1770–1831), who was the first to unite in the study of religion the historical, scientific, and psychological methods, though unable from lack of data to attain valid results. In 1824 Constant wrote in the same spirit, and in 1825 K. O. Müller excluded fanciful interpretations of myths by tracing their genesis. Here we reach the brilliant scholars whose contributions now complement each other to constitute the body of comparative religion, better termed the science of religion, or hierology, as C. P. Tiele called it. First F. Max Müller (1823–1901) applied philology to the interpretation of myths, and so founded comparative mythology. Thus, he identified Dyaus Pitar (Sanskrit) with Zeus Pater (Greek), Jupiter (Latin), and Tyr Fader (Teutonic), which equation he declared the greatest historical discovery of the nineteenth century. He also showed that speech modified

COLUMNS OF THE SUN TEMPLE AT BAALBEK.

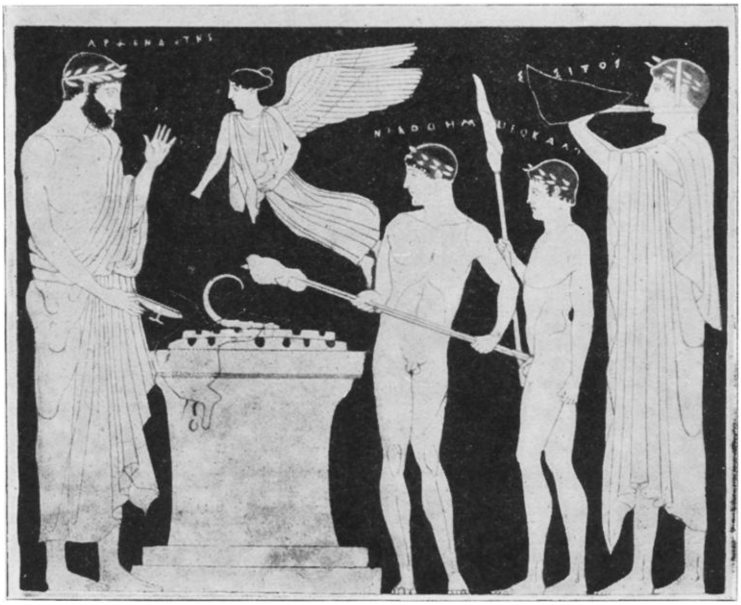
thought, so that myth was partly a "disease of language." Finally he edited the fifty volumes of *Sacred Books of the East* which form the treasury of mankind's bibles, and therewith the indispensable literary data for the study of hierology. His *Natural Religion* (1889) gives the matured conclusions of this brilliant scholar.

But this philological method needed complementation by the anthropological method founded by Professor E. B. Tylor (1832–) in his *Primitive Culture* (1871). Dr. Tylor seeks the sources of myth, not only in language, but also in the attempt to explain nature, in the attribution of inferred events to legendary or historical persons, and in the composition of myths to convey instruction. Under the further influence of the often erratic and unreliable Mr. Andrew Lang (1844–) in his *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1887), this school has increased, until now folklore societies and journals are found in every civilized language. In its interpretation of religion this school combines with the ideas of mythology the rites and customs of a people, which can best be learned from its folklore.

Two Dutch scholars have been pre-eminent, partly with many others in original research, but particularly in combining all such special contributions into consistent, continuous history, and in drawing therefrom the broad and safe deductions of hierology. These are C. P. Tiele (1830–1901) in his *History of Religion* (1876) and his *Science of Religion* (1897 and 1899); and Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848–) in part of his *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* (1887) for the science, which he here terms "Allgemeiner Theil," and "Phenomenologischer Theil," and in his second edition of the same work (1897) for the history, which has rendered obsolete the historical part of the first edition, and now forms the academic standard upon its topic. Other distinguished contributors to hierology are Professor Otto Pfleiderer, Professor Albert Réville, and the late Mr. Herbert Spencer.

DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF RELIGION.

Divergences in the definition of religion are naturally great, since it must include religions varying as widely as Shamanism and Christianity. The Christian needs to take special care not to pitch his definition too high, and thus substitute for religion the highest historic type of religion, which is Christianity, or again the philosophical ideal of religion. A prevalent error is to reduce religion to morality with a divine sanction, or again to make morality an essential component of religion; whereas religion and morality have separate sources and channels, though in close interaction, as will be shown later. Definitions of religion vary mostly as the animistic or naturistic element is made primary, whereas a comprehensive definition makes them co-ordinate. Animism is the worship primarily of deceased human souls, and secondarily of nature-powers upon the type of (Tylor) or in material connection with (Spencer) these. Naturism is the worship of nature-powers simply as man (or animal), without analysis into body and soul, achieved by personification (Pfleiderer). Thus Professor E. B. Tylor, who gave currency to the term "animism," claims, "as a minimum definition of religion, the



A SACRIFICIAL OFFERING UPON A GREEK ALTAR.

belief in spiritual beings." On the other hand, Professor Albert Réville, who introduced the term "naturism," considers naturism the primary of animism, and from that view-point writes:

> Religion is the determination of human life by the sentiment of a bond uniting the human mind to that mysterious Mind whose domination of the world and of itself it recognizes, and to whom it delights in feeling itself united.

But the co-ordination of animism and naturism as sources of religion, which view now prevails (Saussaye), requires the definition somewhat as follows: Religion is the belief in and worship of supersensuous and superhuman being (= beings or a being) (Samuel Harris). Here "supersensuous" is meant to include both personified nature-powers and deceased human souls, while both possess superhuman power. The notion of supersensuousness, life, personality, soul, or spirit had, of necessity, one way or other, its source in man; while the notion of superhuman power took its chief source from nature. Each element must be present to constitute an object of worship; and definitions of religion vary in merit according as they include these two elements and no others. Thus, in Professor Allen Menzies' definition, "Religion is the worship of unseen powers from a sense of need," the term "unseen" connotes the supersensuous, while the term "powers" connotes the superhuman, whereas the phrase "from a sense of need" is dispensable because implied in any case. Other chief definitions can be inferred from our later discussion.

This belief in and worship of supersensuous and superhuman being—a god, whether tree-god, storm-god, or monotheistic god—becomes, when defined and established, a creed and a cult (offering, prayer, dance, etc.); and these two are inseparable, though their ratio varies greatly in various religions. Brahmanism is mainly cult; Protestant Christianity is mostly creed. Their ratio of change likewise varies greatly. Cult remains unchanged for centuries, and even for millenniums; whereas creed slowly changes under changing culture, though it may remain formally attached to the old cult. Consequently, at any given period the cult will afford evidence for the remotest times preceding it, the creed for nearer times, while the current belief must be gained from individual writers and speakers.

The principles and dogmas of creed were contributed by reasoning; the symbols and myths, by imagination. A symbol arises when a thought has been associated with a natural object; a myth, when a thought-series has been associated with a nature-process. Thus water variously symbolizes purity (Judaism), fertility (Hinduism), and humility (Taoism; water seeks the lowest place); and the course of the sun has formed the basis of a divine biography. These religious products of the imagination are no more arbitrary or delusive than are its literary products of metaphor and allegory. As myth is the literary deposit of naturism, so is legend of animism, especially of its cult of heroes, whose deeds are magnified, and sometimes misunderstood, as they are orally transmitted from generation to generation. Myth usually forms the earliest stratum in a scrip-

COLOSSAL STATUES OF AMENHOTEP III., WHICH STOOD IN FRONT OF A TEMPLE SINCE DESTROYED.

ture; then legend joins it, and later dominates or absorbs it, and is itself in turn superseded by history.

The relation between belief and worship is as follows: Belief in the existence of gods excites in man the sense of dependence. He hopes for good, but fears evil, from them; he seeks to secure the former and avert the latter by means of worship. Worship is rendered primarily by the offering of whatever is useful to man, especially food (both animal and vegetable), clothing, weapons, and ornaments. Prayer and praise were secondary, being fitting accompaniments of such offerings, stating the grounds or conditions upon which the latter were made. Music and dancing, when lively, expressed joy; when slow, grief.

Religion as thus defined is one of the five elements or species of human civilization or culture; or, to coin a convenient term, a cultural, that is, an activity proper and peculiar to man. These five culturals are industry (agriculture, handicrafts, commerce, writing, etc.), knowledge, art (architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and literature), conduct (morality and law), and religion. Religion is as proper to man as any other cultural, springing from his normal impulses of hope and fear in presence of the world about him, and is by no means a foreign, unhuman something imported to him from without. Intimate acquaintance with the prophet and his times shows that his message and conduct are entirely explicable as human function. Religion, moreover, is peculiar to man in that no other creature known to him exercises it. If thus proper and peculiar to man, religion stands upon the same firm basis as the other culturals, namely, the undeniable and unalterable constitution of man and of nature, in both which the Infinite is ever present, though in ever-varying degree. One of the myriad evidences of the cultural nature of religion is its partial dependence, like all other culturals, upon industry which supplies material and leisure. Thus General Booth writes about darkest London, "The palpable distinctions (in religion) are those of means;" to which Mr. Herbert T. Stead adds, "Christianity, as-organized in London, is limited practically to the classes which pay income tax."

[*To be completed in the next number.*]